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PRESS CONFERENCE BY
THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER
SECRETARY OF STATE
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SECRETARY KISSINGER: I would like, before I take your questions, to make two points. First, on behalf of my colleagues and my family and myself, I would once again want to express our appreciation to the Government of Pakistan, Prime Minister and Mrs. Bhutto for the extraordinarily warm reception that we have had here. Our talks have been conducted with a cordiality that has marked our relationship, and I consider them both wide-ranging and very constructive. Secondly, on behalf of the President, I want to express the sympathy of the American people for the disaster that has befallen Pakistan in the flood, and we are making available 200,000 tons of wheat under PL-480 to assist in the recovery. Those are the two things that I wanted to say, and now I will be glad to take your questions. Perhaps we can start with questions from Pakistani journalists before order breaks down when American journalists are asking questions.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, has your visit in any way changed Pakistan's attitude toward the reprocessing plant?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Are you Pakistani?

QUESTION: Pakistani-based.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, the issue of reprocessing, as you know, is an extremely complicated issue. Pakistan has been negotiating with France on a reprocessing plant for many years and has concluded an agreement with respect to it. That agreement has all the international safeguards that were considered appropriate at the time that those negotiations started. As far as the United States is concerned, we have, as we have studied the problem, developed increasing concern about the spread of reprocessing plants, even with the safeguards that were considered appropriate several years ago. Our concern is not directed towards the intentions of Pakistan, but towards the general problem of the proliferation of nuclear weapons which can have, in our view, disastrous consequences for the future of mankind. The

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Prime Minister and I have had extensive talks about the problems that are produced by these two attitudes. We have agreed to continue these discussions in the weeks and months ahead, but we are going to conduct these discussions with the determination on both sides that there will be no confrontation on that issue.

QUESTION: Sir, there appears to be a dichotomy in the American approach to the nuclear efforts in Pakistan and India. How do you resolve that?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, there is no dichotomy in the approach towards India and Pakistan. We have deplored, we have greatly deplored, the Indian effort in setting off a nuclear explosive device, and we believe that what India has done is very inimicable to the process of proliferation and therefore to the problems of world peace. We nevertheless — and we also can understand the concerns of Pakistan with respect to that — nevertheless, we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive technology is of such long-range danger to the survival of mankind that at some point the line must be drawn, and the problem we now face in the discussions that we started this morning is how to reconcile the particular concerns of one country with the general concerns. And while I do not say we have reached a conclusion — in fact we have not reached a conclusion — we will, as I said, conduct these discussions with the attitude that we will avoid a confrontation.

QUESTION: Sir, do you generally believe that despite the lifting of the embargo, the rate of supply of arms to Pakistan is rather slow?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, the American bureaucracy is becoming increasingly complicated as its numbers multiply. And even the Secretary of State has trouble getting answers to his questions from the bureaucracy, unrelated to Pakistan. I believe that the requests that have been before us have been, are now all either answered or in the process of being answered, except for one item. And I believe that we are making progress in this field now.

QUESTION: Sir, did you discuss the proposed recommendations in the Subcontinent and the proposal mooted by the Shahanshah of Iran about the Common Market comprising Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, and other countries of this region? Did you discuss that?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, the United States strongly supports the efforts at normalization in this area. And we have paid tribute to the far-sighted efforts that have been made by all of the parties, but we would like to pay particular tribute to the Prime Minister for his efforts in this direction. As for any particular scheme, such as the Common Market, of these countries, the United States does not oppose it and if it commends itself to the parties concerned, the United States would have no objection. But it seems to me to be a matter that the parties involved have to decide in negotiation among each other and it is not one that should appear as an American scheme.

QUESTION: Sir, you have identified what other disputes between the two countries which have been settled. Only one remains. As one of the parties who supported the resolution in the UN, will America be playing a helpful role in the solution of the Kashmir?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, as I have understood the position of the Prime Minister and of the Government of Pakistan, this is an issue that will be discussed between the two governments in a principled but patient manner and that the Government of Pakistan has not asked any outside country to inject itself in these negotiations. We welcome any efforts at a peaceful resolution, and we also commend the basic attitude of negotiating this issue with patience and on the basis of principle.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, what connection, if any, is there between the purchase of a reprocessing plant and the sale of American weapons to Pakistan?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I do not want to say more about the problem of reprocessing than what I have already stated. These are complicated negotiations among friends and they will be discussed on their merits without blackmail or pressure by either side. We have to reconcile these two principles that I have enunciated at the beginning, the concern of Pakistan with agreements it has made in good faith on the basis of the knowledge it had at the time of making it, and the concern of the United States with the principle of nonproliferation. And these discussions will continue.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, will the United States now sell aircraft to Pakistan?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I don't want to get into any particular supply relationship. We will look at Pakistan's requests with a basic attitude of interest in the territorial integrity of Pakistan, and we will discuss them as they come and on their merits.

QUESTION: Sir, do you require some further safeguards on this reprocessing plant? Or is it your position that Pakistan should not have it at all under any circumstances?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The problem of reprocessing is not one that is directed against any one country. We have, for example, worked out some arrangements on reprocessing with Iran that may or may not commend itself to other nations as they study the problem over a period of time. We believe that what we should look for — I am speaking now for the United States, not for Pakistan — the United States will try to elaborate general principles with respect to reprocessing that would apply equally to all countries and that do not involve discrimination against any one particular country. And it's with this attitude that we conduct our conversations also with our friends here.

QUESTION: [Inaudible]

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SECRETARY KISSINGER: I have not said that any conclusions have been reached. And I am sure that the Pakistani press knows the Prime Minister is a man of principle and of spirit. All I described was the issue as we defined it and the attitude with which we will seek to solve it. And we have solved other problems between us. In fact, we have always solved problems between us, and we will approach it in this spirit.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you said that there will be no confrontation, but the US Congress appears to be bent on confrontation over this issue. On the basis of your conversations here, are you confident that you can handle the Congressional attitude?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: As I pointed out, we will have future discussions over the weeks and months ahead, and we are very hopeful to avoid confrontation from any source.

QUESTION: Sir, if Pakistan goes ahead with the reprocessing plant, will this mean a cut in American economic and military aid?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think that it's totally inappropriate for me to speculate now about events that may happen in the future. I have come here as a friend, and we are discussing these issues as friends, so there is no point in speculating about how provisions in our law will apply to circumstances that at this moment do not exist.

QUESTION: Sir, is there any possibility that French reprocessing plants will be used as sort of a regional center such as you were discussing with Iran?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I just don't want to go into the various possibilities that may emerge from discussions. I have explained the spirit with which these negotiations will be conducted and the attitudes that both sides have, and from that it should be apparent that we will look for constructive solutions.

QUESTION: Sir, is it true that your attitude, the US attitude about the reprocessing plant remains the same that it was before your arrival in Lahore?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The basic US attitude towards the problem of reprocessing and its impact on nonproliferation is as I have stated at the beginning. It is substantially unchanged. But this is a basic attitude; it is not to be applied to concrete circumstances. And that is what we will try to discuss in the weeks and months ahead.

QUESTION: Sir, the Indian Atomic Energy Chief has said that within five years India will be self-sufficient in nuclear materials. Meanwhile, the Americans are providing India with nuclear fuels [inaudible]

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SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, the American supply to India refers to one particular contract that has been made many years ago. Certainly with respect to any new contracts the United States would take into account the impact of Indian attitudes on the problem of nonproliferation and would insist on safeguards that would give us assurance with respect to this. The only immediate issue is whether a contract that was made many years ago should be fulfilled with respect to one particular reactor, and that raises questions with respect to the general reliability of American contracts once they are made. This is the issue that arises. But in any new contract that India would attempt to make with us, the basic principle I have stated with nonproliferation would be stringently applied.

QUESTION: Sir, talking about contracts, is it possible that Pakistan can now back out of the French deal in view of the fact that it has already signed a contract?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I simply do not think that it is appropriate for me to go into all the complexities. This is one of the aspects of the Pakistan problem that exists and, of course, as the Prime Minister said yesterday, Pakistan conducts a principled policy. We have to look at all of these aspects in our discussions. And I will not now prejudge what the possible outcome could be, what solutions could be found, if any solutions can be found. But the spirit in which we have always conducted our discussions and the attitude which we have decided to adopt at least makes me believe that we will give it a very good try.

I think I had better get my plane.

Thank you.

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